

In the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 3 as follows:

--The invention relates to a method for the production of plastic skins by powder sintering, in which powder is applied to a forming tool where it forms a plastic skin by sintering, a partial area of the forming tool being made inaccessible for the powder by means of a sealing device, at least in a first pulverization step. The invention also relates to ~~in accordance with the preamble of the main claim and~~ to a corresponding sintering tool for producing plastic skins by powder sintering, which has a forming tool with a surface for receiving a plastic skin being produced and which has a sealing device for separating a partial area of the surface ~~in accordance with the preamble of claim 8,~~ as well as to a plastic part which has on one surface a plastic skin produced using the inventive ~~this~~ production method.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 17 as follows:

--This object is accomplished according to the invention by a production method of plastic skins by powder sintering, in which powder is applied to a forming tool where it forms a plastic skin by sintering, a partial area of the forming tool being made inaccessible for the powder by means of a sealing device, at least in a first pulverization step, characterized in that the forming tool has a separating web along an edge of the partial area and in that a mask having a preferably inflatable sealing edge serves as a sealing device, the mask abutting with the sealing edge against the separating web during the first pulverization step and being secured solely to the forming tool. This object is also accomplished according to the invention by ~~and~~ a sintering tool for producing plastic skins by powder sintering, which has a forming tool with a surface for receiving a plastic skin being produced and which has a sealing device for separating a partial area of the surface, characterized in that the forming tool has a separating web on the surface along an edge of the partial area, and in that the sealing device is designed as a mask having a preferably inflatable sealing edge, which is to be secured to the surface in such a way that the partial area is covered by the mask and the sealing edge abuts against the separating web.

~~according to the characterising features of claims 1 or 8 in conjunction with the features of the preambles of claims 1 or 8. Advantageous embodiments of the invention arise with the features further described below of the subordinate claims.--~~

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 17 as follows:

--Due to the separating web extending along a generally enclosed edge of the partial area, it becomes possible to cover the partial area for the first pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step with a mask which is solely secured to the forming tool. The mask, which does not necessarily have to follow exactly each surface contour of the forming tool, is for this purpose clamped to the forming tool with its sealing edge, preferably an inflatable bead, abutting against the boundary web, such that ~~the said~~ mask is held by the separating web. Thus an extremely effective sealing of the partial area is achieved with a very simple sintering tool. In particular, a simple powder box without additional features can be used. Without great outlay and with greatly reduced effects of tolerance-related deviations by comparison with the prior art, due to the effective sealing powder displacement into the partial area is reliably avoided during the first pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step, even if the edge of the partial area follows a three-dimensional contour. If the first pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step is followed, after removal of the mask, by a further pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step using a different plastics material, differing for example in color ~~colour~~ or mechanical properties, plastic skins can be produced, effectively avoiding scrap, which in a partial area have correspondingly differing properties, and in comparison with the prior art, more general courses of separating lines between areas of different color ~~colour~~ or any other properties are possible. Here a single production step, described as a pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step, can include the application of powder to the heated forming tool, melting-on and removal of excess powder, also in a multiple sequence, for example by repeated rotation of powder box and forming tool.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 9 as follows:

--Particularly suitable as material for the mask is silicone ~~silicon~~, the elastic properties of which facilitate securing the mask to the forming tool, and which permits very good sealing of the partial area particularly if the mask has an inflatable sealing edge. For inflating the sealing edge, the mask can have a preferably separable supply line for compressed air or the like.--

At page 6, before line 1, please inset the following paragraph:

--The sealing edge of the mask may consist of silicone or a duroplastic elastomer.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 14 as follows:

--The invention is explained with the aid of embodiments depicted in Figs. 1A, 1B, and 2, wherein: ~~1 and 2. These show:~~

Figs. 1A and 1B ~~Fig. 1~~ show two successive method steps of a production method according to the invention, a sintering tool and a plastic skin being produced being shown in cross-section, and

Fig. 2 shows, also in cross-section, a sintering tool for producing a plastic skin for trimming an instrument panel--

At page 8, line 33, please insert the following paragraph:

--For example, the mask can have a thickness of between 1 mm and 6 mm, preferably between 2 mm and 4 mm and/or the sealing edge, when inflated, can have a thickness of between 5 mm and 20 mm, preferably between 10 mm and 15 mm.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 23 as follows:

--In Fig. 1A ~~Fig. 1~~ can be recognized ~~recognised~~ a forming tool 1, which has an undercut separating web 2, the separating web 2 forming a closed boundary of a partial area on the forming tool 1. The separating web 2 has a height 3 of roughly 4 mm, a width 4 of roughly 3 mm and, through an overhang towards the partial area, forms a groove 5 having a depth 6 of approximately 0.5 mm. The forming tool 1 itself, of which only a detail can be seen in the figure, consists of nickel and has a wall thickness 7 of approximately 3 mm. The forming tool 1 forms overall a shell-like open shape with a surface contour which corresponds to a desired contour for a plastic skin to be produced. Important for this normally is a surface contour predetermined by a moulded plastic part for which the plastic skin is intended to serve as surface decoration. The separating web 2 can also have a course which follows a three-dimensional contour, in the depicted cross-sections substantially perpendicular to the plane of the drawing.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 8 as follows:

--For the method step depicted in Fig. 1A ~~at the top of Fig. 1~~, a silicone ~~silicon~~ mask 8 having an inflatable sealing edge 9 is so secured to the forming tool 1 that the mask 8 covers the partial area which is surrounded by the separating web 2. The mask 8 is here solely secured to the forming tool 1, and for this purpose clamped with the sealing edge 9 in the groove 5. By inflating the sealing edge 9, which thus attains a diameter of roughly 10 mm, secure attachment of the mask 8 to the forming tool 1 is obtained as well as a good seal between the sealing edge 9 and the groove 5 or the separating web 2 respectively. The mask 8, which has a shape corresponding to the partial area, has a thickness of roughly 3 mm apart from the thicker sealing edge.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 22 as follows:

--Through the production method, two steps of which are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B ~~Fig. 1~~, a plastic skin can be produced which has in a partial area a different color ~~colour~~ from that outside the partial area or which also differs in respect of other properties such as, for example, haptic properties inside the partial area. For this purpose, the mask 8 is secured to the forming tool 1

for a first ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step, as is depicted in Fig. 1A ~~at the top of Fig. 1~~. After heating the forming tool 1 to a temperature of roughly 250°C, for example by blowing through hot air at a temperature of roughly 400°C, the forming tool 1 is placed with the mask 8 onto a powder box which is not shown in the figure. The powder box contains plastics material for the first ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step in powder form, the melting point of this plastics material lying below the temperature of the heated forming tool 1. By rotating the powder box, with the forming tool 1 placed on it, by roughly 180° about a horizontal axis, around which the sintering tool is rotatably mounted for this purpose, the powder is made to fall onto the forming tool 1, where it forms by sintering a first plastics material layer 10 as a result of the high temperature of the forming tool 1. The partial area covered by the mask 8 remains free of plastics material during this process. After a further rotation by roughly 180°, excess powder falls back into the powder box. Repeating the described steps possibly once or a number of times gives the first plastics material layer 10 a desired thickness. The method step depicted in Fig. 1A ~~at the top of Fig. 1~~ shows the forming tool 1, the mask 8 and the first plastics material layer 10 after the steps described so far.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 17 as follows:

--Then the mask 8 is removed, to which end the sealing edge 9 can be emptied. A second ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step follows which resembles the just-described first ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step, but in which some other plastics material is used which differs, for example in ~~color~~ ~~colour~~, from the plastics material used for the first ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step. As the mask 8 is now absent, the initially covered partial area on the forming tool 1 is also reached by the powder. For the second ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step, a different powder box can expediently be used which is similar to the powder box used first but contains powder of a different plastics material. During the second ~~pulverization~~ ~~pulverisation~~ step, a second plastics material layer 11 is produced which becomes connected to the first plastics material layer 10 outside the partial area, but inside the partial area forms a single layer. The method step shown in Fig. 1B ~~at the bottom of Fig. 1~~ shows the forming tool 1, the first plastics material layer 10 and

the second plastics material layer 11 at this point in time. The first plastics material layer 10 and the second plastics material layer 11 together form a plastic skin which, preferably after cooling of the forming tool 1, can be removed from the forming tool 1. Due to the covering of the partial area in a first pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step, the finished plastic skin has a two-colored ~~two-coloured~~ surface structure or a surface which differs in some other properties in at least one partial area. If the forming tool 1 has a differently grained surface inside or outside the partial area, a further contrast between different areas on the plastic skin can be realized ~~realised~~ by differing graining.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 10 as follows:

--A method related to the production method described with the aid of Figs. 1A and 1B ~~Fig. 1~~ is obtained if the second pulverization ~~pulverisation~~ step is omitted. A plastic skin is then obtained which has a corresponding recess in the partial area. Corresponding plastic skins can be used for example as decorations for interior trim parts which are intended to leave an area free. By using the production method hereby described, subsequent cutting-out or stamping-out of the recess becomes superfluous in this case and in this way unnecessary material losses can be avoided with at least a considerable reduction of an otherwise unavoidably large volume of stamping waste.--

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 33 as follows:

--In Fig. 2 is shown in cross-section a complete forming tool 1 having a mask 2 placed on it for a first pulverisation ~~pulverisation~~ step. The forming tool 1 and the mask 2 are constituent parts of a sintering tool for producing a plastic skin which is intended to serve as surface decoration for the trim for an instrument panel. The plastic skin obtains through a method of the above-described type a different colour in an area covered by the mask from that outside this area. In this figure can also be seen an inflatable sealing edge 9 of the mask 2, which is produced from silicone ~~silicon~~ as in the previously described case. As the figure shows, the mask, when it is secured to the forming tool 1, does not necessarily have to follow every contour of the forming

tool 1. The mask 2 is again secured to the forming tool 1 by being clamped into a groove 5, which is not visible here and which is formed by an undercut separating web 2, also not recognisable here. The forming tool 1, a nickel mould produced by an electroforming method in a galvanic shell and having a wall thickness of roughly 3 mm, has a shape which corresponds approximately to a finished trim for an instrument panel. The depicted cross-section would correspond in the finished automotive vehicle to a plane standing perpendicular to the direction of travel in the region of a scoop lying on the left in the figure and serving to cover instruments.--